

US tax sites category grows 15% vs year ago

RESTON, US: comScore, Inc, a leader in measuring the digital world, has released an analysis of US visitation to the online taxes category in January, which showed nearly 1 in 7 US Internet users visited the category to compile information and begin filing their 2011 tax returns. This number represented a gain of 15% versus January 2011.



comScore believes the gain is most likely driven in part by ramped-up ad expenditure among online tax preparers. Among online do-it-yourself (DIY) tax preparation providers, comScore data indicated that Intuit leads the market with nearly 60% of all tax units or returns filed online between 1 January and 18 February 2012. The three largest DIY online tax preparation providers (Intuit, TaxACT and H&R Block) accounted for more than 90% of DIY tax units filed online.

"While a large segment of Americans have become comfortable with filing their taxes online, the strong gains in the category this year seem to be propelled by increased marketing activity on the part of the key tax prep providers," said Brian Jurutka, comScore senior vice president. "During the first several weeks of 2012, we saw the top three DIY online tax prep providers dominate the category, representing more than 90% of all online filings, with Intuit alone accounting for a majority of the market. It will be interesting to see whether the overall growth in the category is sustained and how market shares among tax prep providers may shift as we approach tax filing day on 17 April."

Top 3 DIY tax preparation providers account for 9 in 10 online tax units filed

An analysis of the share of online tax units or returns filed through online tax preparation services from 1 January - 18 February 2012 shows Intuit's TurboTax service accounting for 58.7% of all self-prepared units filed online. TaxACT, recently acquired by InfoSpace, ranked second with 17.8% of tax units, followed by H&R Block, which rounded out the top three with 15.8% share. Altogether, these three services accounted for 92.3% of tax units filed online during this period.

Online DIY Tax Preparation Provider Share of Online Tax Units Filed* January 1, 2012 - February 18, 2012 Total US - Home and Work Audience (Source: comScore Tax Benchmarker)		
Online Tax Preparation Provider	Share of Online Tax Units Filed	
	January 1 - February 19, 2011	January 1 - February 18, 2012
Intuit - TurboTax	57.5%	58.7%
InfoSpace - TaxACT	18.7%	17.8%
H&R Block	15.4%	15.8%
Other	8.4%	7.7%

*Non-Free File Alliance (FFA)

35-44-year-olds are fastest growing demographic for taxes category

A demographic analysis of visitation to the taxes category shows growth to be spread out across all segments, with 35-44-year-olds displaying the highest growth rate, having increased 24% from January 2011 through January 2012. Users between the ages of 25-34 and 45-54 followed, with each segment posting gains of 15% from the previous year. The 35-44-year-old demographic, which previously ranked behind 25-34-year-olds in terms of category visitation, now accounts for the greatest share of the category at 25%.

"The significant growth we're seeing among 35-44-year-olds suggests that advertisers may be focusing their media plans on this age segment as an area of growth," added Jurutka. "In particular, tax prep services seem to be pushing the message that they can offer assistance to help consumers file correctly online, which may be appealing to a segment of the market that prefers conducting transactions on the web but may also have more complex filing needs."

Growth in Visitation to Taxes Among Demographic Segments January 2012 Total US - Home and Work Audience (Source: comScore Media Metrix)	
Demographic Segment	% Growth from January 2011
Age	
Age 18-24	5%
Age 25-34	15%
Age 35-44	24%
Age 45-54	15%
Age 55-64	14%
Age 65+	8%
Gender	
Males	19%
Females	11%

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